



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Serbia and the Russian Federation regarding U.S. Defense Cooperation with Kosovo

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 3, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The President's March 19 determination under Section 503 of the Foreign Assistance Act that Kosovo is eligible to receive U.S. defense articles and defense services are a routine part of establishing bilateral relations with the new country. The U.S. has similar arrangements with Serbia and many other countries.

U.S. defense cooperation with Kosovo can assist with developing a transparent and professional security establishment in the new nation. We anticipate assistance in line with the spirit of the Ahtisaari Plan for Kosovo's independence, which calls for a functioning Ministry of Defense and a small, lightly equipped force under strict civilian control with the ability to participate in civil-military affairs and humanitarian relief efforts.

In September 2001, the UN Security Council terminated the arms embargo that was in effect against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including at that time Kosovo. The provision of such articles would not be contrary to any Security Council resolution.

While it is premature to discuss specifics, the Presidential Determination establishes Kosovo's eligibility to receive assistance. It is a separate process to then develop specific programs.

Nations around the world -- and many in the Balkans -- have benefited from the types of programs the Determination allows us to develop.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.